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SUBJECT: MAURITIUS OBJECTS TO VISIT OF EMORY S. LAND TO  
DIEGO GARCIA

¶1. The Embassy has received a diplomatic note from the government of Mauritius objecting to the summer 2010 visit of the USS Emory S. Land to Diego Garcia.

¶2. The note refers to an announcement made by Rear Admiral Douglas McAneny, Commander Submarine Force U.S. Pacific Fleet, regarding the Land's visit and states (stripped of formulaic opening and closing):

BEGIN TEXT: "The Government of the Republic of Mauritius strongly objects to the proposed deployment of the USS Emory ¶S. Land to Diego Garcia, which forms an integral part of the territory of the Republic of Mauritius.

The Government of the Republic of Mauritius reiterates that the Chagos Archipelago, including Diego Garcia, is part of the sovereign territory of the Republic of Mauritius under Mauritian law as well as international law. It deplores the fact that Mauritius is still not in a position to exercise effective control over the Chagos Archipelago in view of its illegal excision by the British Government from Mauritius prior to its independence.

Moreover, as a party to the African Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty (Pelindaba Treaty), the Republic of Mauritius has the obligation to prohibit in its territory the stationing and the testing of any nuclear explosive device." END TEXT

¶3. COMMENT: The sovereignty of Diego Garcia is an emotional issue for Mauritius. It is also a political issue which is receiving increased attention as the country moves toward national elections this year. The diplomatic note is a result of significant newspaper coverage of Rear Admiral McAneny's announcement and the well-publicised claims of environmental NGOs regarding the possible presence of nuclear weapons on Diego Garcia. Mauritian criticism may be expected to resurface as the date for the Land's visit approaches. END COMMENT

WALKLEY